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AUTHOR Alfonso, Robert J.
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ABSTRACT

The early eighties will likely be viewed as a time of great school reform. Yet even though commissions and other observers describe what schools ought to do, a lack of understanding of how to go about doing it remains. Generally, reform movements are deficient in proper instructional management resources, and educators are left on their own to deal with national criticism and prescription. This paper suggests an integrated model for incorporating three categories of activity--supervision, evaluation, and staff development--related to instructional improvement. Presently these tasks remain isolated entities, even in the literature. In a 1983 survey, for example, supervisors indicated that evaluating teachers would undermine their primary roles. Nonetheless, it is useless to conduct teacher evaluations without a supporting program of supervision and staff development, each of which should be seen as an "equal" in contribution. As a figure illustrates, there is no automatic starting point for attempting instructional improvement; evaluation results could lead in several directions, a wholistic goal. Anything less is change sought in a vacuum. (KS)

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INTEGRATING SUPERVISION, EVALUATION AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

A CONCEPT PAPER

Robert J. Alfonso
Vice President for Academic Affairs
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, Tennessee 37614

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SUPERVISION, EVALUATION, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT:

AN INTEGRATED MODEL

The early 1980's will in all likelihood go down in educational history as another period of great -- or at least intended -- school reform. Clamor has been both strident and striking. One of its characteristics has been its prescriptiveness. National commissions as well as prestigious individuals have described what schools ought to do and in what ways they ought to be different. Equally striking in this reform movement is the lack of any clear understanding of how schools can go about changing or any recognition of the complexities of change in an educational system so diverse in size, complexity, resources, and sophistication. While many and potentially effective remedies have been offered to public schools, a weakness in almost every reform movement has been the lack of an instructional management system to introduce, maintain, evaluate, and adapt changes to local situations. As in the case of the present reform movement, teachers will again be left too largely on their own to respond to national criticism and prescription.

While one can find the exceptional school system in which adequate instructional management resources are present, the more typical system will provide direction and stimulus in only the most general ways. Some school systems will undoubtedly attempt to address the new national imperative through one or more of a series of staff development activities; in addition, supervisors, as they make their periodic round of visits to classrooms, will query teachers regarding their practices and intentions in relation to current educational criticisms; and evaluation procedures and instruments will attempt to get more information, aimed at finding out whether teachers or a school system are measuring up to

what the new national criticism is demanding of them. These responses -- staff development, supervisory intervention, and formal evaluation -- may be made quite independently and perhaps even by personnel who have little communication with each other. Supervision, if it is provided at all, might be the responsibility of a supervisor or an assistant principal; formal evaluation might be done by the school principal, and staff development programs might be designed by someone in a district office or even in an intermediate agency. In practice it is found that these activities are frequently carried out by different persons and just as frequently do not relate to each other either organizationally or developmentally. Yet these three categories of activity all are alleged to have a direct relationship to the same two purposes -- improving teacher performance and achieving organizational goals.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest an integrated model -- both theoretical and functional -- incorporating the three activities of supervision, evaluation, and staff development. These functions are frequently (and increasingly) performed, at best, with only a casual relationship and, at worst, in isolation from each other. This paper asserts that the processes of instructional improvement can best be served when these three school improvement activities are components of an integrated model -- a model which would demonstrate both substantive and functional inter-relatedness.

The Current Scene

The fields of supervision, evaluation, and staff development have received increased attention in recent years and they have been marked by a growing body of sophisticated literature. This is particularly true of staff development, where there has been a dramatic increase in research, scholarship, and practice. The term "staff development" has become educationally fashionable and has

virtually replaced the now outmoded and dowdy term "inservice education." In instances of practice, however, often only the term has been changed -- the practice remains, unfortunately, virtually unchanged.

While these are three distinct areas of behavior, each with its own body of literature, identifiable skills, and trained practitioners, the link between them has not been made clear. On the contrary, one finds increasingly in schools, especially larger ones, that these tasks are performed by different persons, with only incidental contact and planning taking place among them. In order to establish an effective instructional improvement program or instructional management system, supervision, evaluation, and staff development must all be present, must be effective, be accorded equal importance, and be functionally related.

Major writers in each area make only a fleeting reference to the other two functions. Millman (1981) and Borich (1977) in their texts on evaluation make virtually no reference to supervision and staff development; in the area of staff development, Lieberman and Miller (1979), Bishop (1976), Wood (1981), and Harris (1980) deal very little with the connection between the three, and some make no reference whatsoever to evaluation.

At this conference there are numerous presentations by experts on evaluation, many of whom appear to have no conception whatsoever of the nature of school organization, available staff resources, the function of supervision, or how evaluation activities serve any long term developmental purposes. One of the refreshing departures from this research myopia is McGreal (1983), who does a rather thorough job of blending evaluation and supervision; he does not, however, address the area of staff development.

Harris even distinguishes between staff development and inservice education, seeing them as different kinds of activities with a different purpose and, thereby,

through such a distinction still further fragments instructional improvement. Among writers in supervision, Sergiovanni (1983), Lovell and Wiles (1975), Harris (1975), Oliva (1976) and Alfonso, Firth and Neville (1981) deal only briefly with the direct functional relationship among the three areas. Sergiovanni (1983) does give considerable attention to the necessity for teacher evaluation, and describes the usefulness of clinical supervision as a tool for formative evaluation. He also comments on the importance of staff development and, like Harris, distinguishes between staff development and inservice education, arguing that staff development is basically growth oriented while inservice education assumes a deficiency in the teachers. This may be a conceptual distinction, but it does not appear to be one found in practice.

Sergiovanni also states that "staff development is not something the school does to the teacher but something the teacher does for himself or herself." While this assertion is consistent with Sergiovanni's conception of human resources supervision, it is quite the opposite of another conception which would hold that staff development is goal oriented and designed (even though cooperatively) by the organization with the purpose of furthering the development, knowledge, and skill of a staff in keeping with the objectives and emerging needs of the organization. It might or might not address needs identified by teachers. Staff development is a "softer" more palatable concept than either supervision or evaluation, and perhaps that accounts in part for its great popularity among scholars and among teachers and their professional organizations. Supervision sounds heavy-handed; evaluation sounds judgmental; but staff development sounds like a growth experience.

Fragmentation of Function

The dilemma about whether a supervisor should engage in evaluation is one of long standing. In an ASCD sponsored survey in 1975 the issue of teacher

evaluation was identified as the most important among seventeen issues. In a more recent survey covering the same issues (Young, 1983) evaluation again turned up as the only truly "burning" issue on the list. While practitioners recognized the need for evaluation to be done, they did not wish to do it, and they believed that responsibility for evaluating teachers would decrease their effectiveness as supervisors. Among scholars in supervision, Blumberg (1983) and Lovell (1975) also put forth the same argument, either explicitly or implicitly.

Cooper (1983) refers to evaluation as a "common" function of supervision, but then discusses the dilemma of balancing the conflicting roles of helper and evaluator. He notes that teacher evaluation places a severe strain on the development of collegial relationships and that some schools handle this problem by separating the helping and evaluating functions, giving the helping role to a person (instructional specialist) who has no evaluation responsibilities. He further notes that this approach is a "good one."

While I would first of all challenge the assumption that supervision must always strive to be a helping or collegial relationship, we have the rather discouraging proposition that the instructional specialist not do evaluation of teachers. Rather, we are willing to let the evaluation be done by one who is not an expert on instruction, although who is skilled in evaluation. Thus, the process of evaluation may be denied the insights and expertise of the instructional specialist, and with such separation of function, the likelihood of supervision responding to evaluation is made still more remote. Evaluation is badly done, but doing it in isolation from supervision and supervisors does not improve it.

This fragmentation of function is reflected in school organizations; in recent years specialists in evaluation or staff development have appeared more

frequently, with quite specific activities and job descriptions. Where evaluation was at one time parceled out or widely shared in the school system, it is increasingly put in the hands of a person or a small number of persons with such specialization -- or, even worse, without any special abilities. Staff development specialists are also employed, usually operating from a central office, and designing and coordinating system-wide programs across disciplines and buildings. Do these persons plan with each other and do they have any functional relationship to those persons who conduct on-going supervision on a daily -- or at least a more regular -- basis? The answer most often is "no." This paper asserts that it is pointless to conduct evaluation of teachers without a corresponding and supporting program of supervision and staff development. If evaluation -- either formative or summative -- is conducted as an isolated activity, what is it that follows when the evaluation is done? When weaknesses are found or when needs are identified, how are they addressed? And if they are not addressed, then what is the purpose of the evaluation other than providing either isolated feedback on performance or a judgment?

It is just as ineffective and transitory to offer staff development activities that are not buttressed by the dailyness of supervision and the focused characteristics of evaluation. One of the great weaknesses of staff development activities is they are frequently not based on need, not related to issues uncovered by supervisors and/or evaluators, and they are not followed up by supervision and evaluation that would provide evidence that staff development was, in fact, making a difference in instruction and curriculum.

Similarly, an evaluation procedure that does not lead to the developmental and remedial contributions that supervision and staff development can provide is also seriously flawed. Without such follow-up, it is an empty exercise in which an evaluator (often a principal, but just as often an official "evaluator")

from the central office) provides some observational data with which a teacher is left to grapple as best as he or she can in an attempt to use it to improve instruction. If an evaluation does turn up some serious problems or needs, it is a largely useless discovery unless it can be addressed through regular supervisory processes or unless staff development activities are identified or designed that address a teacher's professional needs.

Teachers are dissatisfied with the help they get from supervisors. Blumberg (1980), Lortie (1977), and Alfonso and Goldsberry (1982), have all pointed to the preference teachers hold for seeking help from colleagues. There are undoubtedly many reasons for this discouraging conclusion. One may be the lack of supervisory knowledge and skill; another may be the random, episodic character of much supervision; still another may be its unconnectedness, its rejection of evaluation, and its inability to relate to or to influence developmental activities.

In the area of staff development, a host of state and national studies all point to great teacher dissatisfaction with such programs. Despite the work of Edelfelt (1977), Joyce and Showers (1980), Bishop (1976) and others, current practice in inservice or staff development remains ineffective, random, and rejected by teachers. Among a number of defects uncovered by Wood and Thompson (1980) three are particularly germane to this paper: inadequate needs assessment, activities unrelated to the everyday needs of teachers, and lack of follow-up in the classroom. Staff development can never deal with these issues unless it has a link to supervision, to people familiar with classroom problems and who can provide on-site follow up.

One of the interesting developments in recent years is to move more of the responsibility for and design of staff development activities to agencies

other than the local school itself. Regional Resource Centers in Texas, County Educational Resource Centers in Georgia, and privately or extra-organizationally sponsored programs have only the most tenuous link to local needs, and teachers are often free to select from a smorgasbord of opportunities available. Participation is validated, growth is not. Such random development opportunities may address teacher need, since it is self-selected, but it may not relate to organizational goals or to needs identified by supervisors or by evaluation. (An informal survey of participation in regionally sponsored staff development programs indicated that selections were made by teachers at least as often for reasons of convenience, calendar, and carpool as for content or relevance to need.) Interestingly, then, although teachers are critical of staff development that does not speak to their needs, they frequently fail to select on that basis even when given the opportunity.

Any serious effort at improving teaching and improving schools requires the specificity of evaluation, the organizational tie and immediacy of supervision, and the long-range developmental nature of staff development. Each of these functions draws upon the others for direction as well as contributes to them. While each of the functions has its supporting coterie of scholars and educational evangelists, one is not "more equal" than the other in the sense of organizational need. They are part of an unbroken cycle of assessment, supervision, and development. Organizational purists would argue that evaluation and perhaps even staff development are sub-categories of supervision. Other scholars more recently seem to be viewing staff development as the broader concept, with supervision and evaluation as narrower and supporting activities for this all-embracing commitment to the development of human resources.

Integration of Function

For the purposes of this paper, I wish to sidestep the arguments of functional supremacy or importance. These activities are all embraced by a circle of instructional improvement. Any one of the three could provide a point of entre'. I would also argue that activity in one category almost always requires follow-up in one or both of the others. Each category of activity provides essential information for the others, and an effective model for instructional improvement would require a link among these three activities.

When the link portrayed in figure 1 exists, there is no automatic starting point in intervening in teacher behavior and in attempting to improve instruction. The results of evaluation, for example, could lead to a supervisor devoting a substantial amount of time to working with a teacher in a classroom on a regular basis; it could also, however, have suggested the need for some more formal instruction and follow-up through staff development activities offered by the school system, or an agency, or a university. The point of entre' could also have been through more typical supervisory activity, which might suggest the need for more formal evaluation and feedback or for developmental activities. The cycle could also start with staff development, and supervision and evaluation might flow from or follow that initiative.

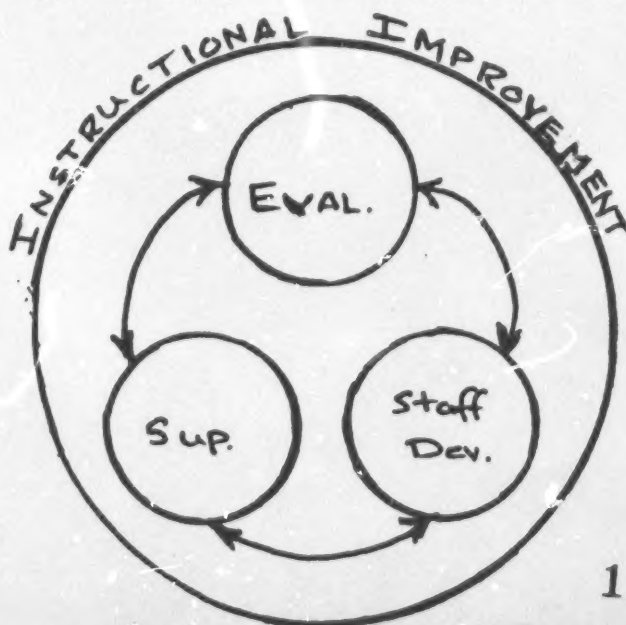


Figure 1

Organizationally, coordination of these functions must be provided, and schools must take a more wholistic approach to instructional improvement. While the way it is done will differ with the size, structure, and sophistication of a district, maximum effectiveness requires coordination of effort, analysis of information and joint planning.

Despite recent developments in supervision, evaluation, and staff development, fragmented activity will continue to weaken our ability to make lasting changes in teacher behavior. The most dramatic examples of changing teacher behavior have come from special projects, often heavily funded and which, in fact, included an integration of activities. The highly successful Teacher Corps projects, for example, united extensive staff development efforts with in-school support, often made possible with the special funding. Such examples of integration are rare.

Yet, this is a time when we do have new insights into supervision, staff development, and evaluation. Clinical supervision, for example, has opened up new horizons in analyzing teaching and in providing feedback. It is not proposed, however, as a means for evaluation. What is gleaned from clinical supervision should be a reservoir for making decisions about staff development, either on an individual or a group basis. We are also far more sophisticated in our evaluation techniques. Instruments are available now that are a vast improvement over those of only a few years ago. Despite these available methods, most evaluation is still perfunctory, systematic, and done with little more than a crudely constructed list of items. Whether done poorly or with sophistication, findings should make a difference in how a supervisor or a principal work with a teacher in the ongoing process of improving instruction. Based on a growing body of information about adult learners, we also have

the potential to vastly improve staff development programs. Staff development, however, cannot be an isolated activity -- it should be a source of knowledge, and the demonstration of new skills that are reinforced by supervision and verified by evaluation.

In recent months I have searched for integrated models, and my inquiry has been discouraging. In most schools I visited, instructional improvement is not taken seriously, and the concept I have proposed is virtually nonexistent. I have spoken with principals who have never heard of clinical supervision, let alone practice it. Teachers report one visit to their classroom per year by a supervisor or principal, and in some cases none. Principals have limited ability to distinguish between supervision and evaluation, and some believe it is supervision only if it is evaluation. The link between either of these and staff development is a gossamer thread, if linked at all. Other than the all-school, one-shot guest speaker (a remarkably durable and discouraging form of staff development) teachers pursue staff development on their own. The annual inservice day that many states sponsor each year is unspecific and unmonitored in many cases. Teachers neither have to report what they plan to do that day nor are they debriefed on their experience. It is only because of the conscientiousness of some teachers that a link between staff development and classroom activity exists at all.

Comments from teachers about their supervision, evaluation, and staff development are devastating. It is a sorry picture. I am discouraged by what I have found, but still encouraged by the possibilities that exist. There are a multitude of reasons for our ineptness at improving instruction, but I believe that fragmentation and lack of coordination is one of them. We need to close the growing schism between supervision and staff development,

as well as the notion that evaluation is something done "to" teachers, while staff development is something done "for" them -- a distinction that may be clearer to scholars than to teachers.

Increasingly, also, we are seeing experts in evaluation who know little of the processes and the skills of supervision. Sergiovanni (1982) refers to their "arrogance" in regard to their belief in the accuracy of measures of instruction. Evaluation without follow-up or even without any prior understanding is evaluation done in a vacuum. If evaluation is to have any formative characteristics and not merely summative ones, it must be supported by supervision and staff development. Each of these supports the other, and combined in a rational, organized, and managed approach to working with teachers their impact can be vastly greater. This wholistic approach is the only alternative to exaggerated claims about the importance of one of these functions and the rather cavalier disregard of one or more of the others. In an integrated approach, we may yet be able to respond to the current clamor for change. Without such a wholistic approach our efforts will continue to be piecemeal and ineffective.

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